

Evaluation of the Missouri Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants Phase III Report: Executive Summary

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Prepared for:



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CTAC's staff is comprised of nationally recognized executives, educators, policy makers, researchers and organizers who have extensive experience working with city, county and state agencies, educational institutions, federal legislative bodies, not-for-profit organizations, philanthropic institutions and the private sector.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021–22, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) awarded more than \$50 million, through the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grants, to assist local education agencies (LEAs), educator preparation programs (EPPs), and community colleges (CCs), in recruiting and retaining effective and diverse teachers. DESE's goal is to build an exemplary state system of educator recruitment and retention.

The Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) is conducting an independent evaluation of the implementation of the grants. The Phase I evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2022a) built an initial understanding of the strategies selected by the grantees. The Phase II evaluation (Liang & Slotnik, 2022b) examined the initial implementation and early impact of the grants. This Phase III evaluation focused on the level of implementation and the strategies which positively impacted teacher recruitment and retention efforts. Findings of this report will help DESE address emerging challenges and strengthen the support to LEA, EPP, and CC grantees.

The following research questions (RQs) guided the Phase III evaluation:

- RQ1: What factors enhance or hinder the implementation of the teacher recruitment and retention grants?
- RQ2: What is the quality of implementation of the teacher recruitment and retention grants?
- RQ3: What is the impact of the grants on teacher recruitment and retention thus far?
- RQ4: Which strategies are improving teacher recruitment and retention efforts? Which strategies are not improving teacher recruitment and retention efforts?

Findings

LEA Teacher Recruitment (Grow Your Own) Grants

- LEA lead contacts continue to highlight their LEA's commitment to and the local community's support for teacher recruitment.
- Lead contacts indicate the implementation of their teacher recruitment grants is as designed. They are generally positive about the quality of their grant efforts.
- Most lead contacts agree that, overall, the analysis of the data they collected show the grant contributes to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts.
- Nearly all lead contacts believe the recruitment strategies they use are very effective or somewhat effective.
- From 2022 to 2023, higher percentages of lead contacts indicate seeing indicators of success of their teacher recruitment grants, and the changes are particularly salient in terms of recruiting racially/ethnically diverse teachers and male teachers.

- Most lead contacts indicate they have shared or reported on results to-date of their GYO grants with key stakeholders once or twice a year.
- Lead contacts highlight the availability of financial resources and the flexibility for how they can use the funds as factors that enhance their recruitment efforts. They also identify challenges such as the lack of interest of students and staff members in taking advantage of the grant-supported opportunities, and low salary and negative perceptions of the profession, as barriers to their GYO program implementation.

LEA Teacher Retention Grants

- LEA lead contacts agree the purpose of the retention grant is clear and they are aware of the availability of support from the MTDS.
- Lead contacts indicate their teacher retention grants are implemented with fidelity. They are generally positive about the quality of their grant efforts.
- Most lead contacts agree that, overall, the analysis of the data they collected show their grants contribute to improvement in their teacher retention efforts.
- Nearly all lead contacts believe the retention strategies they use are very effective or somewhat effective.
- From 2022 to 2023, higher percentages of lead contacts indicate seeing indicators of success of their teacher retention grants.
- Lead contacts highlight the availability of financial resources, and the effective, ongoing support from DESE as factors that enhance their retention efforts. They also identify challenges such as changes in LEA leadership and the lack of personnel, and the time-limited nature of the grants, as barriers to their retention grant implementation.

EPP/CC Teacher Recruitment Grants

- EPP/CC lead contacts believe there is a high level of commitment in their EPP/CC to and support from the local community for their teacher recruitment efforts.
- EPP/CC lead contacts agree the implementation of their teacher recruitment grants is as designed. They are generally positive about the quality of their grant efforts.
- Most EPP/CC lead contacts agree that, overall, the analysis of the data they collected show the grant contributes to improvement in their teacher recruitment efforts.
- Nearly all EPP/CC lead contacts believe the recruitment strategies they use are very effective or somewhat effective.
- From 2022 to 2023, on many indicators, higher percentages of EPP/CC lead contacts indicate seeing signs of success of their teacher recruitment grants.
- Lead contacts highlight support from EPP/CC faculty and leaders, and collaboration with LEAs and community partners as factors that enhance their recruitment efforts. They also identify challenges such as the grant timeline, and the current public perceptions of the teaching profession, as barriers to their recruitment grant implementation.

Recommendations

Building on the accomplishments to date, the following recommendations are intended to assist DESE in providing more targeted support to LEAs, EPPs, and CCs.

- Provide additional clarification and guidance on the timeline of grant implementation.
- Provide more customized sharing and learning opportunities for grantees.
- Strengthen the support to EPP and CC grantees.
- Support the professional growth of more MLDS principals on teacher recruitment and retention.
- Expand efforts to promote the teaching profession by launching a promotional campaign with the theme, *Missouri Teaches*.

Conclusion

Teacher recruitment and retention grantees across the state continue to indicate they implement their grants with fidelity. They believe the grants effectively contribute to improvement in their teacher recruitment and retention efforts. The foundation for catalyzing innovation and achieving better results is now in place.